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Elimination of racism and racial discrimination: comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action

Global efforts for the total elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and the comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action

Report of the Secretary-General*

Summary

The present report is submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution A/61/149. It provides an overview of activities undertaken by States, human rights mechanisms and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on activities undertaken during the period from August 2006 to July 2007 on the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. This report is a follow-up to the previous report of the Secretary-General on this subject (A/61/337), submitted to the General Assembly at its sixty-first session.

* The present report is being submitted after the deadline in order to incorporate the information most recently received.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 61/149, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on the implementation of the resolution to the Assembly at its sixty-second session. The present report focuses on activities relating to the comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the 2001 World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance carried out since the submission of the previous report to the General Assembly (A/61/337).

2. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), by note verbale dated 28 March 2007 sent to States and by letter also dated 28 March 2007 sent to United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, international and regional organizations, national human rights institutions and non-governmental organizations, requested information for contributions to the report of the Secretary-General on global efforts for the total elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and the comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

3. In order to facilitate the preparation of replies, a guidance note on contributions was also sent requesting that replies should concentrate on the following questions: (a) has the State developed an action plan to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia or another form of intolerance, or to promote non-discrimination and equality; (b) has the State adopted specific policies to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia or another form of intolerance, or to promote non-discrimination and equality; (c) has the State developed specific forms of cooperation with or has your State contributed to the work of regional bodies or centres that combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia or another form of intolerance; (d) has the State adopted measures to counter the dissemination of discriminatory, racist and xenophobic messages on the Internet, in accordance with paragraphs 144 to 147 of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, and to promote the positive use of the Internet to foster social harmony and to combat racism; (e) has the State undertaken any other action or adopted any other measures to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia or other forms of intolerance; or to promote non-discrimination and equality (e.g., publications, meetings, campaigns)?

4. The deadline for submissions of contributions was 31 July 2007. OHCHR received replies from 16 States. No information was received from other stakeholders. The replies received are summarized in the present report. Original contributions are available for consultation at the Secretariat. Any additional contributions received after the completion of this report will be included in the report to the General Assembly at its sixty-third session.

II. Contributions received

5. The contributions received concern various measures undertaken by States to implement the Durban Programme of Action and/or to combat various forms of discrimination pursuant to the contents of national constitutions and relevant legislation.

Member States

6. The Government of Angola reported that immediately after the restoration of peace in 2002 it had begun to set up programmes aimed at eliminating the remnants of racism inherited from the colonial era. Those programmes included sensitization through school curriculums and the dissemination of brochures. Additionally, Angola was in the process of updating its legal instruments with a view to eradicating the racist standards which were incorporated therein.

7. The Government of Argentina reported that, pursuant to its 2005 national plan against discrimination, xenophobia and racism, recommendations had been made to revise all of the legislation in effect at that time in order to adapt it to the objectives of the plan, as well as to introduce the issue of discrimination into the legislative agenda. As a result, several laws had been amended, including Law No. 26.160, which declared a state of emergency of four years with the aim of containing the displacement of indigenous populations, reordering territorial rights and regularizing communal property.

8. The Government of Argentina added that, various actions were being undertaken in general to broaden access to justice for indigenous people; identify and rectify discriminatory legal provisions and incorporate new rights; promote the creation of associations for the defence of minorities and vulnerable groups; strengthen administrative institutions created to fight discrimination; develop public policies and programmes to prevent, investigate and punish trafficking in women and children and combat domestic violence; increase the participation of those suffering from disabilities and of rehabilitation professionals in monitoring bodies; establish a special national framework to improve the integration of refugees and their family members; ensure cultural, linguistic and regional diversity in the various communications media; and increase capacity-building and awareness among police officials and health professionals with a view to promoting and implementing human rights and to combating racism and discrimination.

9. The Government of Azerbaijan reported that a national action plan on human rights protection had been adopted on 28 December 2006. Through the implementation of the Plan, Azerbaijan was intending to bring its national laws into conformity with international human rights standards. The Government cited numerous laws and provisions which were in line with the recommendations contained in the Durban Programme of Action and with other global efforts for the elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

10. The Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina reported that it had adopted by succession the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. The Government also reported that, although it had not adopted a plan of action to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, the prohibition of discrimination was built into its national Constitution, which directly incorporates the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. Bosnia and Herzegovina referred to the Roma Committee of the Council of Ministers, which was established to combat racism directed against the Roma and to promote tolerance and diversity. The Government also reported that it had established a gender equality agency in 2004 and that is was currently engaged in the process of establishing a council for national minorities to serve as an advisory body to its Parliamentary Assembly.

11. The Government of Cyprus reported that it had ratified most European and international instruments relating to racism. The Government also reported that it had enacted important legislation to harmonize the various European Union Council directives concerning discrimination on various grounds, including Directive 2000/43 on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, as well as the Equal Treatment Law of 2004, No. 59(1)/04, which prohibits discrimination on any of the above grounds in the public and private sectors. In compliance with Directive 2000/43, two separate bodies were created to address issues of discrimination: the Cyprus Anti-Discrimination Body and the Equality Authority, which together constitute the Cyprus Equality Body. This body handles discrimination claims.

12. The Government of Cuba reported that all Cubans, regardless of colour or origin, have the right to free and universal access, without discrimination of any kind, to basic social services such as education and health care, and to one of the world's most overarching systems of social assistance. In addition, all institutional manifestations of racism and racial discrimination have been eradicated throughout all levels of government, and all Cubans without exception enjoy the same rights, with no discrimination whatsoever.

13. The Government of Cuba also reported that its criminal law condemns all actions which inspire ideas or give rise to theories that either allege the superiority of one race or group of people of a certain colour, race or ethnic origin, or whose intent is to justify or promote racial discrimination of any sort or in any manner. Cuba stated that it had achieved important progress in solving various problems, including through the implementation of the Durban Programme of Action.

14. The Government of Croatia reported that the Constitution guarantees equality of treatment to all. Regarding action at the national level, the Government has adopted a series of plans, strategies and policies to ensure the protection of vulnerable groups from discrimination, including the National Policy for the Promotion of Gender Equality in the Republic of Croatia 2006-2010; the National Strategy for Unified Policies for Disabled Persons 2007-2010; the National Programme for Roma 2003; and the Action Plan for the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015.

15. On the basis of recommendations of the European Commission, and in the light of the negotiating process for accession to the European Union, the Government of Croatia has elaborated a law on the suppression of discrimination and on the establishment of a unique body for the suppression of discrimination. On 30 May 2007, the Government amended the Law on the Ombudsman in order to change the mandate relating to that Office and to create an independent body for equality. Croatia has also joined the Council of Europe All Different-All Equal campaign on diversity, human rights and participation, which is aimed at reinforcing the fight against racism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia and intolerance by a means of awareness-raising campaigns.

16. The Government of France reported that it had established several institutions to combat the evil of racism. Following the entry into force of the legislation adopted on 30 December 2004, France created the High Authority to Fight Discrimination and Promote Equality to address cases involving all forms of discrimination. That independent body, whose mandate is to assess discrimination and equality claims, also plays an important role in the dissemination of information

to combat racism and promote equality as well as in identifying and disseminating good practices. The High Authority reports annually to the President, the Prime Minister and the parliament.

17. The mission of the Interministerial Committee to fight Racism and Anti-Semitism, which was created in 2003, is to ensure that the work of Government ministries is free of racism and anti-Semitism and that the activities and programmes of the various ministries in that field are coherent and effective. Moreover, the National Consultative Commission for Human Rights operates through a working group devoted exclusively to racism-related problems. The working group is composed of representatives from civil society and various ministries, including, in particular, the justice, labour and education ministries. In this connection, the Ministry of Education plays a very important role, not only by incorporating tolerance as a pillar in education, but also by disseminating publications on racism and providing support to students in connection with incidents involving racism.

18. The Government of Germany reported that the fundamental principles on which it bases its political activities include the belief in a free, democratic order and a rejection of all conceivable forms of extremism and racism. Various programmes against right-wing extremism, xenophobia and intolerance have been drawn up and are being implemented, and the German Government will continue to follow up on their implementation.

19. Given the many factors which can contribute to the emergence of right-wing extremist patterns of behaviour, the German Federal Government is pursuing a multidimensional strategy which combines preventive and suppressive elements. Germany views the prosecution of crimes committed via racist propaganda on the Internet as a very important task. With a view to identifying Internet material that is in breach of criminal law and to analyse such material from that perspective, the security authorities in the Federal Republic of Germany carry out random searches on the Internet. In addition, Internet providers are called upon to undertake voluntary self-regulation and control of content and to block criminal sites. In line with its obligations under the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, in 2003 the German Government forwarded to the United Nations its Report on Ongoing and Planned Measures and Activities of the German Government against Right-Wing Extremism, Xenophobia, Anti-Semitism and Violence (Federal Parliamentary Printed Matter — BT-Drs. — No. 14/9519). That document constitutes a core national action plan.

20. The German Federal Government is currently working on a further draft version of that report, which will be completed before the end of 2007. To combat the influence of racism and xenophobia, the Federal Government also initiates and supports activities within civil society. In this regard, the national action plan will be discussed with civil society in cooperation with the German Institute for Human Rights.

21. The Government of Greece reported that it spares no effort to combat racism. To that end, Greece has incorporated into its Constitution a basic declaration against all forms of discrimination. In addition, Council of Europe directives against discrimination are incorporated into national legislation. The Government has been paying special attention to the Roma community. In this connection, over the past 25 years the Government has undertaken a series of initiatives to integrate that part

of the population by ensuring that they face no discrimination in gaining access to housing, health care and education.

22. The Government provided information in its updated report for 2007, about the integrated action plan for the social inclusion of Greek Roma. The action plan's two priority objectives are the rehabilitation of housing for Greek Roma and the provision of services in the fields of education, health employment, culture and sports. The action plan is coordinated by the alternate Minister for the Interior on the basis of an inter-ministerial committee.

23. The Government of Italy reported that, pursuant to European Union Directive 2000/43/EC, which invited member States to set up bodies to ensure and promote equal treatment, a national office for the promotion of equal treatment and the removal of discrimination based on race or ethnic origin was set up within the Department for Equal Opportunities of the Ministry of Rights and Equal Opportunities. The Directive was incorporated into Italian legislation through legislative decree No. 215/2003.

24. In 2007, the National Office worked at the local level to guarantee adequate support for the victims of discrimination. The Office strengthened its liaison with its focal points in Turin, Milan, Padua, Rome, Naples and Catania with the aim of consolidating activities relating to the reception of and support for victims, data collection, communications and awareness-raising campaigns to combat all forms of racial discrimination.

25. In this context, the Office started a systematic monitoring process covering local observatories acting against discrimination or studying immigration, and information and orientation desks for foreigners in the territory. The purpose of that exercise is to create a network of national bodies working to combat discrimination which will receive legal assistance and scientific support from the Office when they provide information on discriminatory practices at the local level.

26. Regarding racism in sports, the National Monitoring Centre on Sports Events, which was set up within the Ministry of the Interior with the task of devising and implementing essential strategies to fight the phenomenon of violence in stadiums, recently published some updated information concerning the implementation of Act No. 41/2007.

27. The Government of Kuwait asserted that it had consistently expressed its profound concern and unequivocal condemnation of all forms of racism and racial discrimination, including related acts of racially motivated violence and xenophobia. The Government reported that it guarantees that measures taken to combat terrorism at the national level do not discriminate in purpose or effect on grounds of race, religion or descent. Kuwait has adopted appropriate legislative, regulatory and administrative measures to prevent acts of racism and racial discrimination. The Kuwaiti Constitution, in articles 7 and 29, enunciates the principles of equality and freedom. There are no provisions in any legislation that contravene those two articles.

28. The Government of Lebanon reported that the Ministry of Labour devotes due attention to the question of global efforts for the total elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, regarding non-discrimination or differentiation between nationals and foreigners who are legal residents of Lebanon. Equality before the law in employment is provided for under the Labour Code, as

amended by Act No. 207 of 26 May 2006, which provides that an employer may not discriminate on grounds of gender with regard to type of work, rate of pay, employment status, promotion, vocational training or attire.

29. The Government of Mauritius reported that a truth and justice commission was being established to set out the facts regarding slavery and indentured labourers. The Government considered that that exercise would enable the country to move forward. Moreover, in 2001, the Government declared 1 February — the date of the abolition of slavery in Mauritius in 1835 — a public holiday. The holiday is intended to promote universal awareness of the tragedy of the slave trade and its consequences.

30. The Government of Romania reported that it had adopted several measures to eliminate all forms of racism. The Government asserted that it had adopted several ordinances from 2000 through 2004 aimed at preventing and fighting racism, prohibiting organizations and symbols of a racist, fascist or xenophobic nature and promoting gender equality.

31. The above-mentioned ordinances were subsequently amended and supplemented as the Ordinance to Prevent and Punish All Forms of Discrimination and included, for instance, Ordinance No. 137/2000, which reaffirms the principle of equality and the elimination of discrimination. In Romania, the goal of eliminating all forms of discrimination is being achieved by putting in place special measures to protect minorities and punishing active and passive behaviours which result in the unjust or degrading treatment of a person, group or community.

32. Ordinance No. 77/2003 to Prevent and Punish All Forms of Discrimination expanded the meaning of discrimination as follows: "any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, social class, beliefs, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, non-contagious chronic illness, HIV infection or belonging to a disadvantaged category which is aimed at or results in a restriction or removal of recognition, use or exercise, under conditions of equality, of human rights and fundamental freedoms or of the rights recognized by law, in the political, economic, social and cultural field or in any other fields of public life".

33. The Government of Serbia reported that the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms had been incorporated into its Constitution. Serbia reported that the Roma Committee, which addresses issues of racism affecting the Roma community, as well as the establishment of the National Minority Council as an advisory body, will further serve to promote tolerance and respect for diversity.

III. Update on activities

34. Below is a summary of various developments during the year concerning the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

A. United Nations human rights mechanisms

35. During its seventieth and seventy-first sessions, held, respectively, from 19 February to 9 March and from 30 July to 17 August 2007, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination adopted concluding observations following consideration of 2 initial reports and 12 periodic reports of States parties to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. It also adopted concluding observations under its review procedure concerning the implementation of the Convention in one State party that has not submitted a report for more than 10 years. The Committee reminded each State party with which it held a dialogue to continue to take into account the relevant parts of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action when implementing the Convention and to include in its next periodic report information on national action plans or other measures taken to implement the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. The Committee also adopted one opinion on the merits and two negative opinions on admissibility regarding individual communications submitted in accordance with article 14 of the Convention.

36. At its seventieth session, the Committee adopted a study on possible measures to strengthen implementation through additional recommendations or the update of its monitoring procedures, to be transmitted to the Intergovernmental Working Group on the effective implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action at its fifth session, which was held from 3 to 7 September 2007. The Committee also held a dialogue with the five experts entrusted with the preparation of the study on the content and scope of substantive gaps in the existing international instruments to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance on complementary standards of the Intergovernmental Working Group. At its seventy-first session, the Committee decided that it would hold a thematic debate on the issue of double discrimination on the grounds of race and religion during its seventy-third session, to be held from 28 July to 15 August 2008. It also entrusted two members with the drafting of a new general recommendation on special measures. Furthermore, at its seventy-first session, the Committee adopted new guidelines for its early warning and urgent action procedure, as well as new guidelines designed to assist States parties in the drafting of their reports.

37. The activities of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance can be grouped around three axes: the reports submitted to the Human Rights Council at its fourth and fifth sessions; coordination activities with other human rights mechanisms; and participation in various meetings and conferences, including those on racism in sport. The reports submitted to the Council include the report on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (A/HRC/4/19); the updated report on political platforms which promote or incite racial discrimination (A/HRC/5/10); and the reports on country visits to Switzerland (A/HRC/4/19/Add.2), the Russian Federation (A/HRC/4/19/Add.3) and Italy (A/HRC/4/19/Add.4).

38. In his general report (A/HRC/4/19), the Special Rapporteur brought to the attention of the Council the persistence of serious manifestations of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. The report on political platforms which promote or incite racial discrimination (A/HRC/5/10) provides an update on the reports on that issue previously submitted to the Commission on Human Rights

(E/CN.4/2006/54, E/CN.4/2004/61) and to the General Assembly (A/59/330). The report confirms the serious tendencies identified in the preceding reports, especially as regards the banalization of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. In his recommendations, the Special Rapporteur underlined the role of strong political will and of ethical vigilance to counter, through effective political programmes, the scourges of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

39. Regarding coordination activities in the implementation of other human rights measures, the Special Rapporteur has strengthened his collaboration with the OHCHR Anti-Discrimination Unit through regular consultations and by participating in many of its activities, including a panel on racial profiling that was held during the sixth session of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent, which met in Geneva from 29 January to 2 February 2007; a high-level panel discussion on the theme "Racism and discrimination: obstacles to development", held in Geneva on 21 March 2007 on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination; and a series of activities organized in Nepal by the Unit and the OHCHR office in Nepal with a view to assisting that office in furthering its work on social exclusion and discrimination. The Special Rapporteur highlighted the importance of his participating actively, in cooperation with the Anti-Discrimination Unit, in the preparatory activities for the Durban Review Conference scheduled for 2009.

40. The Special Rapporteur participated in the fourteenth annual meeting of special rapporteurs, representatives, independent experts and chairpersons of working groups of the Human Rights Council, held in Geneva from 18 to 22 June 2007. The Special Rapporteur took part in several side events in parallel with the meeting, including a briefing on the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; a consultation on cooperation with national human rights institutions; and a consultation with United Nations agencies on questions relating to minorities.

41. The Special Rapporteur took part in several conferences and meetings at the invitation of Governments and civil society organizations on issues relevant to his mandate. Such events included, among others, the Race Convention 2006, held in London on 27 and 28 November 2006 on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the creation of the Commission for Racial Equality; a seminar on the theme, "World civilization or clash of civilizations? Multicultural London: does it work?" on 20 January 2007; the first Strategic Congress of the Board of the European Network against Racism, a platform of 600 European non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working to combat racism in all European Union member States, which was held in Berlin from 20 to 22 April 2007; the general conference of the European Coalition of Cities against Racism, held in Nuremberg, Germany, from 10 to 12 May 2007; the fourth International Human Rights Forum Lucerne, devoted to the theme of human rights and children, held in Lucerne, Switzerland, on 24 and 25 May 2007; the second Global Inter-Media Dialogue, held in Oslo on 4 and 5 June 2007 at the initiative of the Governments of Indonesia and Norway; and the conference on combating discrimination and promoting mutual respect and understanding, organized by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and held in Bucharest on 7 and 8 June 2007.

42. Concerning racism in sports, and in soccer in particular, the Special Rapporteur considers that this problem requires an important collaboration between the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council towards an educational strategy based on fair play.

43. Turning to country visits to Switzerland (A/HRC/4/19/Add.2), the Russian Federation (A/HRC/4/19/Add.3) and Italy (A/HRC/4/19/Add.4), the Special Rapporteur provided details on his findings and made various recommendations to the respective Governments.

44. The Intergovernmental Working Group on the effective implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action held the first part of its fifth session from 5 to 9 March 2007. During that part of the session, the Working Group examined the role of national action plans in strengthening national programmes for eradicating racism and maximizing the benefits of diversity. The Working Group also held a preliminary exchange of views with the five experts selected to conduct a study on complementary international standards pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 1/5 of 30 June 2006.

45. The Working Group held the second part of its fifth session from 3 to 7 September 2007. The second part of the session was devoted entirely to the study on complementary international standards. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination presented a study on possible measures to strengthen implementation through optional recommendations or the update of its monitoring procedures (A/HRC/4/WG.3/7). The five experts also presented a study on the content and scope of substantive gaps in the existing international instruments to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (A/HRC/4/WG.3/6).

46. In this regard, the Working Group invited States to further consider the recommendations made by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in its study. The Working Group also held an interactive dialogue with the five experts on their study and will transmit the study to the Human Rights Council pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 1/5 and decision 3/103.

47. The Working Group adopted recommendations and conclusions on the second part of the fifth session. Those recommendations and the recommendations adopted during the first part of the session will be included in the report on the fifth session of the Intergovernmental Working Group, which will be submitted to the Human Rights Council.

48. The Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent held its sixth session from 29 January to 2 February 2007. The Working Group provided details relating to its examination of the theme of racial profiling as a violation of the right to non-discrimination. The conclusions and recommendations of the Working Group are contained in its report to the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/4/39).

B. Activities of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

49. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights continues its work towards the effective implementation of the Durban Programme of Action, particularly through the activities of its Anti-Discrimination Unit. The

Office provides assistance to international and national actors in their work in countering racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and support for the mechanisms established to follow up on the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. The Office provides substantive and organizational support to the Intergovernmental Working Group on the effective implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent and the group of independent eminent experts. OHCHR also provides support for the sessions of the preparatory committees towards the organization of the Durban Review Conference. The report (A/CONF.211/PC.1/L.3) of the first Preparatory Committee for the Durban Review Conference, which held its first organizational session in Geneva from 27 to 31 August 2007, will be transmitted to the General Assembly.

50. OHCHR continued its practice of sharing information on a regular basis and facilitating the participation of stakeholders in meetings, seminars and workshops which the Anti-Discrimination Unit convenes or to which it is invited.

51. OHCHR participated in an expert seminar on the theme of regional standards and mechanisms to combat discrimination and to protect the rights of minorities organized by the independent expert on minority issues. Held on 29 and 30 January 2007, in Washington D.C., the objectives of the seminar were, inter alia, to identify best practices in international law to be made available to regional organizations, specifically to the Organization of American States in formulating new mechanisms to promote, monitor and protect rights with respect to minorities and other groups facing racism and other forms of discrimination and to make a substantive contribution to the ongoing process of developing a regional convention in the Americas. As intended, the seminar was conducted in an informal and free-flowing manner aimed at generating an interactive dialogue, and no effort was made to build consensus around a general set of recommendations. A summary record of the meeting reflecting the proceedings was made available to the participants for follow-up action.

52. OHCHR participated in the conference, held under the auspices of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, organized by the European Coalition of Cities against Racism and held on 11 and 12 May 2007 in Nuremberg, Germany. The Conference brought together cities, municipalities and NGOs engaged in combating racism and discrimination. Approximately 300 participants take part in the activities of the Coalition, which includes approximately 60 municipalities in 14 countries. The Conference adopted recommendations for submission to municipal authorities on concrete actions which could be undertaken to mitigate racism and discrimination in education, employment, housing and health.

53. To commemorate the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on 21 March 2007, OHCHR in Geneva, in New York and in the field organized activities in connection with this year's theme, "Racism and discrimination: obstacles to development". It was recognized that development as a comprehensive economic, social, cultural and political process is aimed at constantly improving the well-being of the human person and societies and that racism and other forms of discrimination not only violate human rights but constitute major obstacles to achieving development. In the light of that consideration, OHCHR organized, on 21 March, a high-level panel discussion on

the interrelationship between racism and other forms of discrimination, development, poverty, economic growth, good governance and conflict.

54. The panels brought together outstanding speakers, who discussed racial discrimination and development as a chain reaction and engaged in discussions on the relationship between racial discrimination and poverty; the relationship between racial discrimination and good governance; and the relationship between racial discrimination and economic growth.

55. OHCHR organized, in Nepal from 23 to 27 April 2007, an experts' advice mission on social exclusion and long-standing discrimination. The mission was intended to assist OHCHR in Nepal in refining its policy and strategy in providing assistance to the Government in addressing social exclusion, discrimination and inequality. The mission was composed of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance; the Special Rapporteur on human rights of indigenous peoples; and two experts on discrimination based on work and descent of the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. The mission was also intended to provide an opportunity for various local partners and stakeholders to conduct dialogues with the Special Rapporteurs and the experts on issues of concern relating to equality and non-discrimination. The conclusions of the mission will assist OHCHR in Nepal in enhancing its capacity to support the Government of Nepal.

IV. Conclusions

56. Because combating racism requires a multifaceted approach, the adoption of relevant legislation and the amendment of existing laws and their implementation, combined with action at the national level based on strategies elaborated through national action plans, constitute important means of pursuing that objective effectively.

57. An increased number of communications from Member States, United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, international and regional organizations, national human rights institutions, and non-governmental organizations on their efforts for the elimination of racism would allow for a more comprehensive assessment of progress achieved and challenges that remain to be addressed.